<u>EI-736</u>
MARINUS DE NOOYER
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INTERVIEWER: PAUL SIGRIST
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NETHERLANDS, 1905
8

SHIP:
PORT:
RESIDENCES:

SIGRIST: Good afternoon, this is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Tuesday, April 9th, 1996, and I might say it's a snowy, cold April night. I'm in Passaic, New Jersey with Marinus de Nooyer.

DE NOOYER: Marinus de Nooyer.

SIGRIST: And that's spelled little D-E.

DENOOYER: Marinus, space small D-E, capital N-O-O-Y-E-R.

DENOOYER: Thank you. Mr. de Nooyer came from the Netherlands in 1905. He was seven years old, almost eight at that time and his family was detained for two days at Ellis Island in 1905. Anyway, thank you very for letting me come out and do this interview. Can we begin by you giving me your birth date, please?

DENOOYER: My birth date is December the 11th, 1897.

SIGRIST: And Mr. de Nooyer, can you tell me where in the Netherlands you were born?

DENOOYER: I was born in the city of Goes, G-O-E-S, province of Zeeland, Netherlands.

SIGRIST: And Zeeland is spelled?

DENOOYER: Z-E-E-L-A-N-D.

SIGRIST: There was an ocean liner called the Zeeland.

DENOOYER: Yes.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me whereabouts in the country that is? What part?

DENOOYER: That is in the south of Holland, very close to the Belgium border. As a matter of fact, during World War I, when I was here in America, but my family in Europe told me they could hear the cannonading in Belgium. So we're close. Consequently, I speak Flemish. The Zeeland dialect, in those days Europe was all dialect because there were people who had never been out of their own cities. They were born and died in the city without ever leaving it, so that every area developed a dialect and we had what we called the Zeevs—yeah, Zeevs dialect.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that?

DENOOYER: It's Zeeland. I can't spell it for you because my Dutch is fragmented today. Lack of use.

SIGRIST: Say that word again very slowly then, so we might get a phonetic spelling.

DENOOYER: Zeevsatol.

SIGRIST: We'll have to find someone who can speak a little Dutch to help us.

DENOOYER: Yeah, well, they would have to speak the Zeeland dialect.

SIGRIST: Can you give me an example of how that dialect differs from the same word spoken in a different part of the country?

DENOOYER: I would suspect it's largely because of its proximity to the Belgium border. The Zeeland dialect and Flemish are almost identical. Consequently, I had no problem with the Flemish language.

SIGRIST: So it's greatly influenced by the Belgian—

DENOOYER: Yes, very much so.

SIGRIST: What can you remember as a child about the town that you grew up in? The town itself?

DENOOYER: Well, of course, I've been back several times, so I—

SIGRIST: Only use your memory as a child, though.

DENOOYER: Yeah, as a child, of course, one of the big things that stand out in my mind, as a child, and I'm going back to my childhood, that Queen Wilhelmina I believe was her name, visited Gose sometime. I suspect I was about five or six years old at the time and of course, like every—like a Presidential visit today, the Queen's visit in Holland is possibly even more important. I can clearly remember her standing on the level of the entrance to our city hall, Stockheis [PH], and of course making an address of some sort, which I do not recollect, of course. But I certainly remember it being a very gala occasion. The marketplace, of which we had three in Gose, which is a center for farmers. It's not a big city, but very important for marking and this was on what we called a groote mart, which means the great mart.

SIGRIST: If you can spell—if you can spell of any of these words—

DENOOYER: To the best of knowledge, G-R-O-O-T-E, M-A-R-T, mart.

SIGRIST: Groote, meaning big?

DENOOYER: The great market.

SIGRIST: The great market.

DENOOYER: In literal translation. Then we had two other markets. We had a—let's see now. Well, one was called the kroikel [PH] mart, which means small market. Kroikel is a—I can't think of it. Small shellfish. I can't think of the name of it.

SIGRIST: Oysters or clams?

DENOOYER: Small. Huh?

SIGRIST: Clams?

DENOOYER: No, smaller. I'll think of it later.

SIGRIST: And the word you're saying is kruckle?

DENOOYER: Kroikel. It's—oh, I've got it on the tip of my tongue. That's the penalty I pay for age. My memory fails me on occasions.

SIGRIST: Okay. Tell me more about this visit by the monarch? For instance, how did your family feel about the king and queen?

DENOOYER: Oh, my father was somewhat of a rebel. He was more or less a free thinker and along the lines, also political lines. He had very little good to say about monarchs or legislators. He thought they were all parasites living on the body public, which is not altogether wrong because we have them in this country, too, you know. I was just reading the paper this morning about [unclear]. They're finally going to put him in jail. Dumb Pollock. But royalty, it was important in Europe in those days.

SIGRIST: Were there any ways that you paid homage to Queen Wilhelmina at home somehow?

DENOOYER: No, not in our house because my family were not admirers of royalty of even the legislative bodies. My father was, I suspect, being only a child, but he was more or less socially inclined. I can remember singing socialistic songs and the Boer War was just over and [unclear], I don't remember the name of it, and of course all the Hollanders were in favor of the Boers whipping the stuffing out of the Englishmen because Hollanders don't like Englishmen for several reasons. I can remember going on a vacation to Middleburg where I have several aunts and uncles living, and from there we went to Flessinga [PH], which is Flushing in English Flessinga and Flessinga overlooking the North Sea they have a statue of [unclear] which is Michael de Ruiter, who was a Dutch admiral who put the English fleet to flight. As far as I know, he's one of the few people to make the English turn tail and run for their home ports. Of course, the Dutch, as far as I can remember and I was taught, they venerate him as one of the greatest Dutch admirals that ever lived.

SIGRIST: And what was his name again?

DENOOYER: Michele de Ruiter, I believe. Michael. Michele is Michael. De Ruiter, that would be D-E, R-U-I-T-E-R, I believe.

SIGRIST: Little D, big R?

DENOOYER: Yeah, it's always little D's, although some of my family spell it with a capital D, but it's a prefix and the D should be—who am I to say what should be?

SIGRIST: Tell me more about the town. Is there a building that sticks out from your childhood?

DENOOYER: Yeah, well, the city hall, Stotheis [PH], of course, always stood out. It's an old town. It's great and of course it was established before the reformation so what is now the Protestant Church—in those days you had only two kinds. There Catholics and Protestants. There were no—I never heard of any Lutherans and all. Just Catholics and Protestant. What is now the—was there before the reformation was the Catholic cathedral. So you can see it's an old town.

SIGRIST: As a child, what was your favorite place to go in the town?

DENOOYER: My favorite place was the canal connecting us with the sea.

SIGRIST: And why was that your favorite place?

DENOOYER: Because I liked boats and I like water and they had a fish market at the foot of the canal, and it was rather interesting for a youngster.

SIGRIST: Just before—

DENOOYER: in addition to that, my grandmother just lived over the hill of that. That is, my maternal grandmother. Yes, my maternal grandmother lived there and I had an aunt who lived there, and they all lived close together. My aunt was a unique creature. You'll be interested to hear that. I think—I'm not sure whether she had twenty-two or twenty-four children. Veritable baby factory, if you will, please. That's the only way to describe it, but they were a wonderful family.

SIGRIST: Is that your mother's sister?

DENOOYER: My mother's sister, yes. My mother's oldest sister. Of course, my mother had only eight—[whistling]. That was my hearing aid whistling. My mother had only eight, two which was stillborn. They didn't practice birth control, you know, and you get talking about children, I have to tell you about my mother was a bit of a martinet, if you will. She was a good mother, but thank goodness--she cracked the whip once in a while.

SIGRIST: What was her name?

DENOOYER: Her name was in Dutch, [unclear].

SIGRIST: Got to spell that for me, please.

DENOOYER: Constantia Caleta [PH]. Her maiden name was Addies, A-D-D-I-E-S, and she was two years older than my mother. She lived to be a hundred and two years old.

SIGRIST: Goodness. Tell me what you know about your mother's family background.

DENOOYER: Now, my mother's mother was—I still remember both of my grandmothers, both maternal and paternal and well—

SIGRIST: Talk about your maternal grandmother right now.

DENOOYER: My maternal grandmother. Her name was Dinah and she was tall and I think very stately for her day. We had some pictures and I'm trying to track them down. I don't know who took them. My sister-in-law had them. Her husband died and the damn pictures disappeared, much to my chagrin.

SIGRIST: Talk about your grandmother's personality.

DENOOYER: But she was stone deaf, but she was rather aloof.

SIGRIST: She was deaf, you said?

DENOOYER: Yeah, stone deaf.

SIGRIST: Stone deaf, uh-huh.

DENOOYER: Stone deaf, as we say.

SIGRIST: Do you have any stories about her deafness? Something that sticks out in your mind?

DENOOYER: No. No. No, I can't, see. Of course, she was a survivor. She was eighty-four when she died.

SIGRIST: Did she use any devices to hear more clearly?

DENOOYER: No, they had nothing. I recall some peopled used a horn, but she didn't use any device. You just shouted at her and she understood, but she was tall and stately and, oh, possibly a bit aloof.

SIGRIST: Why do you say aloof? What makes you say that?

DENOOYER: Well, this is a child's approach, you see. I don't think I ever broke down the barrier between her and I, or I don't think any of her other grandchildren did. She was always a very distinct person, grandma who's to be honored and respected and don't get too familiar with her. So I suspect, see, aloof is the word to use in that she never permitted anyone to get too close to her.

SIGRIST: Do you remember any of her clothing, what she would wear? What an older woman would wear at that time?

DENOOYER: Well, of course, they all wore long skirts, pleated. More or less pleated skirts, very voluminous, of course. Two or three petticoats. Pantaloons I believe they wore. They wore blouses, belt in the middle. The blouses had, I guess they call them lamb chop or big blown up sleeves.

SIGRIST: Leg of mutton sleeves.

DENOOYER: Yeah, what is it?

SIGRIST: Mutton.

DENOOYER: Mutton.

SIGRIST: Leg of mutton sleeves.

DENOOYER: Leg of mutton sleeves. Of course, they didn't use—in those days they didn't know what powder or paint was. Of course, the French may have used it and I've heard that, but the Hollanders look with a great deal of disfavor upon any aid to beauty. You were you and you remained you and that was that.

SIGRIST: How did your grandmother wear her hair?

DENOOYER: To the best of my knowledge, she wore it combed back and just tied in sort of a bun. But—

SIGRIST: Can you talk about your mother's relationship to her mother? How did they interact?

DENOOYER: I really don't know too much about that, but we went to see her, I guess, as dutiful children. We went to see her at least once a week, usually on the weekend because—well, I had to go to school, kindergarten, and mother had lots of work to do taking care of—we had five children at that time. Well, wait. Yeah, four or five. The last one was born in 1904, I believe.

SIGRIST: But you don't remember specifically how your mother got along with her mother?

DENOOYER: Oh, very well, but like everything else, she kept her children at a distance, too. She was a loner, I would say. She lived alone, took care of her own house until the day she died, to the best of my recollection, which was eighty-four. She was I would say a healthy specimen. They didn't bother too much with doctors in those days. Either you lived or you died, period. They never had doctors for childbirth. They always had a midwife. My mother had a midwife in this country. Only for the last one, my youngest brother she had a doctor, but the other first two, which was still born, she had a midwife.

SIGRIST: Do you know anything about your birth? Are there any stories about the day you were born that you heard?

DENOOYER: No, I don't know a thing about it. As they say, I don't remember the day I was born, other than the calendar. I guess I had a normal life.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the birth of any of your brothers and sisters?

DENOOYER: I have no sisters.

SIGRIST: They were all boys in your family?

DENOOYER: We wound up finally with six boys, and my mother had two stillbirths, also boys and as she got older and the boys grew up, she was very much conscious of birth control, which she never practiced. This is funny. I have to tell this. It's incidental, but it's on my mind. When one of my brothers were married, my

mother, who assumed that I was the most knowledgeable about these things, the ways of the world and sex, would say to me, "Maurin, go talk to your brother now, he's getting mother." I said, "Mother, I don't have to talk to my brother. He knows as much as about this business as I do." "Well, you talk to him anyhow. You take him upstairs and have a chat with him and tell him about this baby business." And as a closing remark, "And tell him, for heaven's sakes, tell him not to be like their father." The first time she told me that, I said, "What was wrong with my father?" She said, "Nothing, except every time you found his pants on the bed, there was another baby," and I being the knowledgeable one of course and rather bold, would say to my mother, "Well, that's fine, but while my father was so busy making babies, what was my mother doing?" And she said, "Get out of her and go upstairs. Talk to your brother." Well, it's a good story and it's true.

SIGRIST: And it says a lot about the attitudes of the time.

DENOOYER: But it shows you how they changed and as you say, different attitude, different atmosphere, different age.

SIGRIST: Tell me what you remember in the Netherlands about the birth of one of your brothers?

DENOOYER: In the Netherlands, I remember very distinctly when I first went to kindergarten and in the Netherlands, to the best of my recollection, the minute you were potty trained, or pretty near close to it, you went to kindergarten. No pre school, just kindergarten and then you went to—the grammar school was only six grades because you had gone to kindergarten. You got all of the preliminaries and when you went to regular school, you were a regular student. No fuss, no muss and you went to school six days a week, except on Wednesday you had a half a day and Saturday you had a half a day. But you went to school six days and no monkey business. It was all work.

I liked the school system in Holland. For me it was good. It was strict and down to business, and they taught you well. I think the Dutch had a good school system and a good educational system, even in those years. Even though it's ninety years ago.

SIGRIST: Right, more than that. But do you remember the birth of any of your brothers or how it was approached or seeing your mother pregnant or anything like that, at that time?

DENOOYER: No, we were always—you were always chased out of the house. The births were at home. No such thing as hospital births. Nobody my age was born in a hospital. Nobody up to 1940 or '50 perhaps was born in hospitals there. No, I should take that back because my daughter was born in a hospital in 1926.

SIGRIST: How was the birth of a new child explained to the older children?

DENOOYER: They didn't. They just came and there were no explanations. Sex education and birth and death were never explained to me. I had to get it out—your sex education and all that stuff, you got on the street rather than anywheres else. Now, I can remember distinctly when youngest brothers, who's eighty-two now, the baby. He was a Johnny come lately. He was an accident.

SIGRIST: Born in this country?

DENOOYER: He's the only one was born in this country and I can remember my mother chasing out of the house while the birth took place, and my older—I can see it today. We sat alongside of a factory building where there was a smoke stack and the walls were warm. It was in September and it was kind of a blustery day like it is today. We sat with our back against the wall, my older brother and I, lamenting the fact that my stupid father and mother had to have a baby at this age. But thank goodness he was born and my mother always had difficulty in childbirth. I can remember the one preceding my youngest brother, she had two stillbirths between that, and I can remember one instance where the doctor was very blunt. My mother had a doctor at that time and told my father, "You're going to have to lose either the baby or your wife." My father says, "I need a wife more than I need another baby." Very matter of fact, no ands, ifs or maybes about it. You want a baby or—there's a possibility you're going to have to sacrifice one or both. He says, "I need a wife. I've got five kids."

SIGRIST: Are you the oldest of the kids?

DENOOYER: No, I'm the second oldest, but I'm the—well, there's only two of us left, me and the baby. We called the baby. The baby is eighty-two, so there are only two of us left.

SIGRIST: But you were the second child.

DENOOYER: I was the second child, yeah.

SIGRIST: Well, let's stop talking about your mother for a second and go onto your father. What was his name?

DENOOYER: My father's name was Leiven.

SIGRIST: How do you spell that?

DENOOYER: L-E-I-V-E-N, to the best of my knowledge.

SIGRIST: And then of course de Nooyer.

DENOOYER: de Nooyer, yeah.

SIGRIST: Tell me what you know about his family background, where his parents came from and what they did, that sort of thing.

DENOOYER: His father was a carpenter and his mother, my paternal grandmother, was a nice, loving woman. She wasn't short. She was average build, but rather stocky and very, very pleasant. Matter of fact, we lived with her for two or three months before we came to America because there had been some hitch in our departure and everything had been sold. Well, I'll tell it to you. Some of my family doesn't even know this. My father was in jail for three months. Simple Simon he was, he was a shoemaker and I mean a shoemaker, not a cobbler. He made shoes by hand, specializing in orthopedic shoes, so he was a craftsman, a real craftsman. But he was a dreamer and when plans had been made to go to America, as they say about the United States—you didn't go to the United States. You went to America. I don't ever remember hearing the words United States, always America. United States was America. The place to go was America and I suspect most Europeans went to America. They didn't go to the United States. They went to America and he had purchased a sewing machine, fancy sewing machine, on time of course and he had sold it without telling the people who sold it to him that he had sold, and then they had him arrested because they thought he was going to abscond with the money. He wouldn't steal a nickel off a dead man, but the European law being what it was, they put you in jail first and try you afterwards. So my father was held in Middleburg for three months, which apparently was the seat, and so we had to live with my grandmother during my father's confinement. Of course, when he came to trial they let him go. He was an innocent victim, but in European law, I believe they

practiced Roman law rather than English law, and if you're charged with anything, they arrest you and put you in jail. There wasn't no bail in those days and then when the date of the trial come, they try you and if you are not guilty, they'll let you go. Period, no apologies, no nothing, that's the law.

SIGRIST: Were you allowed to visit him while he was incarcerated?

DENOOYER: I can remember two visits to Middleburg. He didn't have that much money for train fare. You know, it was a train. Train ran [unclear] to Flessinga and we rode the train. I think there was not a bus but sort of a passenger conveyance which was drawn by horses which had seats lengthwise and to the best of my knowledge, that went from Gose to Middleburg twice a week or something of that nature.

SIGRIST: I'm wondering if you remember any details about being at the prison and how you would visit him?

DENOOYER: No, I didn't.

SIGRIST: No.

DENOOYER: No, I have no recollection of that. But I remember going to kindergarten and I remember going—

SIGRIST: You mentioned that your father was a dreamer. Talk about his personality and what that was like.

DENOOYER: I suspect it must have been his French antecedents. He's the only man I know—he died when he was seventy-six. He's the only man I know that was more in love with his wife the day he died than the day he met her. He was a romanticist, as I am. I'm a romanticist at heart.

SIGRIST: Do you know how your parents met?

DENOOYER: No, I have no idea. My mother was working as an upstairs girl for somebody or other and her education was limited. My father was very literate. My mother could—she could read and write, but that was the limit of her, read the paper.

SIGRIST: Do you know what year they married?

DENOOYER: [Sighs] Let's see, my mother was born in 1867. My father was born in 1869. My mother was thirty years old when she bore

me. I suspect that they must have been—1867. '97. I suspect they might have been married in '95.

SIGRIST: 1895.

DENOOYER: Something along there. I never did know exactly.

SIGRIST: Was your other brother born in '96?

DENOOYER: My older brother born in '96. My older brother and I were the only two people that I know who were born in the same year. we had a birthday in the same year because we were only eleven months and three weeks apart.

SIGRIST: So he must have born in early '97 then. Let's see, you were born in 1897.

DENOOYER: No, he was born in late '96.

SIGRIST: Very late '96.

DENOOYER: So I was born on the 11th of December. He was born on the 18th, so between the 11th and the 18th, we were the same age.

SIGRIST: I see. I see.

DENOOYER: Because, I say, there were only eleven months and three elapsed between births. As I told you before, my father was a busy man and—but he was a lover at heart and he didn't have a mean bone in his body.

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BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE 1

SIGRIST: What's another story you can tell me about your father that reflects his personality and his outlook on life?

DENOOYER: Well, of course, he worshipped my mother, until the day he died, and as I said, I think he was more in love with her then than he was when he married her, I suspect.

SIGRIST: What kinds of things did he do for himself, for his own pleasure, his own entertainment?

DENOOYER: No, his family was his only—his wife and his family was all he worked for and he worked hard, and he mended shoes at night.

My mother took in laundry. With five kids, they worked extra hours in order to advance themselves. He was—well, he applied himself. He wasn't that industrious in the sense of the word that he stayed with—he worked as a laborer, rather than as a shoemaker. Got a bad start and—

SIGRIST: You mean once he came here to America?

DENOOYER: Yeah, uh-hmm. But he believed in education.

SIGRIST: Was he an educated person?

DENOOYER: Well, he was very literate. As a matter of fact, I can remember in the first years we were here they had what they called the Holland Society, which was a group of Hollanders in Garfield and Lodi and Passaic, of which there were a lot when I was a boy. In Passaic I think they had eight Dutch churches. There were a lot of Hollanders here. In fact, we had a section of Passaic that they called—they still call it Dutch Hill. Of course, Lodi was popular with a lot of Hollanders in Lodi, and Garfield was sort of an in between. There were quite a few of us, but not as many as there were in Passaic and in Lodi. Patterson had a lot of Hollanders, too.

SIGRIST: And so your father joined.

DENOOYER: And so my father became a member of that Holland Society and after a year, he became its secretary. So he was quite literate. Of course, in those days they wrote very floret languages, you know. When I was a boy, I could read and write Dutch, but today I have difficulty with it, for lack of use, of course. Yet, I've been back to Holland several times and I can remember last time I was back in Holland with my daughter, we were in [unclear], I believe it was, yeah. That's the town where the town lies below the sea level. You stand on the dyke and look down at the town and the ocean is above—the sea is above you. But I went to a shop there with my daughter to make some purchases of some kind and the shopkeeper said to me, "Mr. de Nooyer," in Dutch now, "how long have you been out of Holland?" and I says, "Well, since 1905," and then he turned to my daughter and says, "You know, your father still speaks Dutch very fluently," and that was of course after I'd been in Holland four or five days and you pick it up. Then, of course, I also speak German fairly well and because I speak German fairly well and Dutch and Flemish, I have—and English as a second language, I have no difficulty with Africans because

Africans is a bastard language, which is basically I would say Africans is about fifty percent Dutch, twenty-five percent German and twenty-five percent English, and as much as I'm conversant with Dutch and German and have some smattering of English, I can get along fairly well with an Africana, which is unusual.

I have to tell you a story about that. I have an Irish friend whose father was an Irish rebel and had to leave Ireland with a price on his head. So where did he go? He went to South Africa, so he could kill some more Englishman. Oh, quite a few years ago, probably thirty or forty years ago, her father died and her sister came from South Africa, and I said to my wife—I've been married twice, but my second wife at that time. I said, "Well, I have talk Africans to her," and she says, "Oh, you can't do that." I says, "Yes, I can," and I told her what I told you about the mixture of languages and it was a bastard language to begin with. I got along fairly well with her in Africana, but that's another story, of course.

SIGRIST: Tell me about the house that you lived in in Gose—that was the name of the town, right?

DENOOYER: Gose.

SIGRIST: Describe the house, what it was made out of.

DENOOYER: It's funny say "describe the house." The first time I went back to Holland in 1975—God, that's almost twenty-five years ago, and I had been on a tour in Europe and we were in Paris and I said to my wife, "Oh, the hell with it. Let's get off this tour. It's too commonplace. Let's do something else. Let's get a car and we'll go to Holland." So that's another story. I got a car in Paris. It was a Volkswagen and we had to make a stop in Brussels because we had some friends there. So we had to make a visit outside of Brussels before we drove to Holland, so we drove through Belgium into Holland. Now, this was my second wife.

SIGRIST: Remember, I'm interested in hearing what you remember as a child about the house you grew up in.

DENOOYER: Yeah, I'm getting back to that.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

DENOOYER: So we got to hometown, driving through tulip fields and I'm singing in Dutch and my wife says, "I can't understand." I said,

"Well, I'm in Holland now," and I said, "I'll drive you right to the house where I lived." "You don't remember it." "Yes, I do," and I did just as sure as shooting, without missing a curve, although I hadn't been there since 1905. This is in '75, so that's seventy years, but I drove with deadly aim to the house I lived in and she says, "You do remember," and I can remember coming down the Main Street through the Rotobach [PH], the Kleinmach [PH], the Kroikelbach [PH] right into the street where I lived, and I said, "There's the house."

SIGRIST: And can you describe it for me, especially what you remember as a child about the house?

DENOOYER: Yes, indeed. What I remember more about the house was Sunday, Sundays. Of course, my mother was very fussy about her house and in those days on Sunday, you know, talk about lace curtains. The Dutch with the great lace curtains and they always have the curtains parted so you can look into the house to see how clean it is, you know. They're clean. You had to scrub the sidewalks every Saturday and you had to scrub them before noon. They had to be scrubbed and cleaned before noon. That was the law. It's funny, I can remember first time I was in Baltimore, they have the stoops there, two, three steps leading up to the house in Baltimore. They had the same kind of rule. They had to scrub their stoops, as they called it, every week and they recalled to me my Dutch days.

But Sunday was an extraordinary day, of course. As all Europeans and most Americans, Sunday dinner was an event and you always had to get dressed, of course.

SIGRIST: What would you wear, as a small child at the turn of the century? What were you probably forced to wear to Sunday dinner?

DENOOYER: Well, black, of course. Shoes. My father made shoes. We didn't wear klompen, wooden shoes. Only people in America, even today they think that all Dutchmen wear wooden shoes and the only people that wore wooden shoes were people too poor to buy leather shoes or fisherman and farmers. They lined them with straw to keep their feet warm. Of course, when they came into the house, there was always sort of a vestibule where they kicked off the klompen and walked into the house in their stocking feet. They never wore wooden shoes in the house.

SIGRIST: Do you know how to spell klompen?

DENOOYER: Kalompen, K-L-O-M—K-L-O-M-P-E-N, to the best of my knowledge.

SIGRIST: Kalompen and that's wooden shoe.

DENOOYER: Wooden shoes.

SIGRIST: But you didn't wear those?

DENOOYER: No. Oh, my father a shoemaker! That would be heresy. It would be treason. Why, your father a shoemaker and you wear—oh, no, no.

SIGRIST: What else sticks out in your mind about Sundays.

DENOOYER: But to get back, this always stands out in my mind. On Sunday we always had afternoon tea. I have to tell you a story about afternoon tea, after I get over this Dutch one. My mother had what she called Esprit des lampier which means spirits. She had an alcohol lamp and she had a silver—silver plated of course. Ordinary people didn't have sterling. They had silver plated kettle on which she put over that sort of a rack with a alcohol burner for a tea kettle. Always on a Sunday afternoon, not later than three or four o'clock, we had what English people called tea and crumpets. You had tea and cake, all very daintily served, even though for lower middle class Europeans, Sunday afternoon was teatime and you had to take—we always had little white napkins, linen. Paper napkins were unknown in those days. You had linen napkins.

SIGRIST: This was all very formal.

DENOOYER: Very formal Sunday afternoon tea.

SIGRIST: You called the water heater the—

DENOOYER: Spiritis lampier, a lampier again being in the vernacular for a small lamp. It was always a very nice event and I still recall it with delight, to the effect that last time I was in England—I've been to England four or five times. I love England and then I've been to Ireland twice. But the last time I went to England, I said to my daughter, "Now, we're going to England for five days," because she had some things that she wanted to see that we had missed on previous visits to London. We went up with a design of what we wanted to do and I said, "Now, this time we're going to London, I'm going to have tea at the Ritz, come hell or

high water." Well, she had to make an appointment six months before to get to the Ritz for tea, but I had my tea at the Ritz. I didn't think it was all that good. A couple of years before—as I say, I'd been to England several times, four or five times, we had tea at Mason and Fortnam [PH], or Fortnam and Mason—I always forget who comes first. One of the most beautiful shops I've been in in my life and we had afternoon tea there, and it was much more delightful, although the surroundings were not like the Ritz. But I think the food and even the service was better than the Ritz.

SIGRIST: We should—because of our time, we should pretty much just kind of stick to Holland.

DENOOYER: Now, to get back to Holland.

SIGRIST: I want to know what your house was made out of. What did they build the houses out of?

DENOOYER: They were all brick. Every Hollander that came to America and saw wooden houses was astounded because in Holland there are no wooden houses. There are in Germany, Black Forest and Austria there are wooden houses. Wood and brick. Wood and stone, as they say, but in Holland it was a brick house. It was rather narrow and of course, bedrooms, you didn't have bedrooms per se. You had a room and there were alcoves built in.

SIGRIST: The bed itself was—

DENOOYER: Which of course—oh, what's the terminology? You had an upper level.

SIGRIST: A bunk bed?

DENOOYER: Built like a bunk bed and there was built in bedding. Of course, built in bedding comes back to the fact that a lot of Dutchmen brought their bedding with them when they moved to America. The reason was, it was feather bedding and feather beds, of course, you slept on feathers and you had feather coverlets, also. Of course, they were very valuable and they were prized possessions, so you packed them in and took them to America with you, so that you knew you were going to sleep comfortably when you got to America. Not the United States, to America.

SIGRIST: Did your family use this feather bedding in Holland?

DENOOYER: We used in Holland and we used it here, in America, too.

SIGRIST: Do you have any stories that you remember about using it in Holland before you came here? How it was made or how you got it or—

DENOOYER: No, it was just like an ordinary ticking, I suppose, to the best of my recollection. Coverlets and bed linens were I would say rather course. Well, muslin, mostly unbleached, I suspect, if I remember. I don't remember too much about it, but it brings back a story in Canada, when my daughter was a child.

SIGRIST: Well, if it's not Holland—

DENOOYER: But I don't want to digress. And the house was rather narrow.

SIGRIST: Was it a freestanding house or was it—

DENOOYER: No, no. No, we lived in the city.

SIGRIST: Oh, so city housing.

DENOOYER: There are no freestanding houses in the city.

SIGRIST: So they were attached houses.

DENOOYER: Even people of wealth lived in attached houses. They were all attached.

SIGRIST: How many rooms? Walk me right through the front door and through the house?

DENOOYER: The front of the house was, let's see, I would say was no more than about twenty foot wide. Had a nice big window. Like now a bay window. Straight window, but a big window so that you could show off your curtains, of course. I believe there were two bedrooms. A combination living room and dining room and my father had a shop in there and it was all self contained unit. In those days—

SIGRIST: How many floors in the house?

DENOOYER: One.

SIGRIST: It was all on one floor?

DENOOYER: All on one floor. It was nice. It was comfortable. We enjoyed it.

SIGRIST: Is there a piece of furniture that sticks out in your mind as a child in that house?

DENOOYER: No. No, the thing that sticks out most was the bedroom with the alcoves, you know, and that's—

SIGRIST: What about the kitchen, where was that located?

DENOOYER: The kitchen, I don't have too much recollection about the kitchen. Even as kids, you spend more time outside. I don't remember, to be frank with you. I was interested in the outdoors, more than anything else.

SIGRIST: What about the lighting in the house? What kind of lighting?

DENOOYER: Lighting. Kerosene lamps. We had nice kerosene lamps with wonderful glass shades, you know. It was really nice. It was pleasant. Of course, life was a lot easier in those days.

SIGRIST: What kind of food did people eat in Holland at the turn of the century? What do you remember eating as a child?

DENOOYER: Well, of course, Hollanders eat a lot of pork. Beef was expensive in Holland and they used to say beef was only for the rich and the poor eat pork and fish. I don't ever remember eating any fowl in Holland, to be frank with you. It was pork chop or pork roast.

SIGRIST: Was there a particular dish that your mother made that was a favorite for you?

DENOOYER: Yeah. Of course, there was a lot of soup. Pea soup, of course, is a favorite in Holland. Sneert they called it.

SIGRIST: Snat?

DENOOYER: Sneert. S-N-E-E-R-T, I believe, sneert, which is a colloquialism for pea soup. It was healthy and robust and you ate bread, of course, bread with lunch meat. A lot of cheese. Dutchman's cheese, ham and things of that sort. Of course, Friday was always fish day. Whether Jew, gentile, Greek or Mohammedan, Friday was fish day in Holland.

SIGRIST: What kind of fish? You mentioned earlier going down and watching where the fish came in.

DENOOYER: Whatever was prevailing. I can remember my mother pickling muscles and you could—she'd buy them by the bushel. If there were an overabundance, you see, you'd buy a bushel and you'd have to sort and pick out the bad ones. She'd but the kids at the table and sort them out and clean them and then my mother would—and then debeard them, as they say, you know, and it was pleasant because you sat around the table and you talked and you chatted and you cleaned the fish and mother pickled them, you know, for another day. I can remember my father. As I say, my father was a bit of a rebel and he liked oysters, but he always said, "Those damn Englishmen get the best oysters because they expert the prize oysters, of course, and the poor go to lower level Hollanders," which he never admitted to, got the lower grade oysters while the prize oysters went for a fancy price to England, or to France, you see. They always bemoan that fact, but this is why I like that.

I spoke to you before about the canal at the end which was a dock and there was a fish mart. When the fish boat come in there and unload, you see, and as a kid you'd go there and take it. I can remember my mother paying, oh, a pail full of muscles for a dime, but who the hell had a dime? And that sort of thing.

SIGRIST: Was there a food that you did not like as a child that you were expected to eat?

DENOOYER: I don't recall any dislikes. Food was not that plentiful and children didn't have likes or dislikes. You ate what was on the table and enjoyed it. I can remember eels, of course. Eels, Dutchmen like eels. I like eels today. I like a smoked eel.

SIGRIST: How did your mother prepare eels?

DENOOYER: Oh, she fried them and this is another peculiar thing—my mother frying eels. When she fried, she cut them into pieces of course and the pieces were probably an inch and a half or two, and she stood them on end and I can remember very clearly being curious about the reason why she stood them. She said, "So the fat can come out." Now, that's a strange thing that these people knew, even in the primitive days. Now, this is almost a hundred years ago, but they still—in frying the eels, she stood them on the end so that all the oil and fat would come

out of it and the eels would be, after being fried would be nice and dry and devoid of all the fats.

SIGRIST: Health conscience even then.

DENOOYER: They knew, and of course you had a lot of potatoes and cabbage.

SIGRIST: I was going to ask, what vegetables did you eat?

DENOOYER: Cabbage. Mother would make what they called a gestampe. I guess that would be G-E-S-T-A-M-P-E or something of that nature, which was a dish she would make it either with cabbage or with carrots and she would mix it in with lard. They used a lot of lard, and then she'd mash it into one big family dish and you would have that instead of meat. You had meat twice a week. Meat was expensive.

SIGRIST: And mostly pork you said?

DENOOYER: Yeah, it was a luxury.

SIGRIST: How often a day did you eat?

DENOOYER: You ate three times a day.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what times you ate?

DENOOYER: No. Lunch was light. Dinner was always good.

SIGRIST: What time would you eat dinner?

DENOOYER: Oh, about six o'clock. Between six and seven o'clock. It was late because they worked late hours, you see. They usually went with daylight more or less. Went with daylight, and as I say, a lot of bread and butter. The bread was good, you know.

SIGRIST: What about for special occasions like confections of some sort or sweets, were they ever served at that time?

DENOOYER: My mother had a special butcher. She went to what she called a Deutcher. Now what the hell did they call a butcher in Dutch? The slockler [PH], the Deutcher slockler. He was a German butcher and he was a craftsman. They always got the best that they could afford. Food was important. Food was important and even once they came to America, food was important. Meals were important elements. I suspect most Europeans

were that way because my mother-in-law was that way, too. If they splurged, it was not on themselves. It was on food and they always ate well. Although, I can remember now—well, I'm getting back to America again when I should be staying in Holland.

SIGRIST: Well, we're going to put in another tape in a minute and then we're going to get you to America. So you can tell me American stories when you get to America.

DENOOYER: And to get back to Holland, when we were going to go to America, I can remember my last day in school my mother dressed with a long sleeved shirt, you know, a blouse and in those days the sleeves were always long. You wore armbands and the armbands were made of German silver with flexible—oh, what's the element of—flexible—expandable armbands.

SIGRIST: Like a watchband.

DENOOYER: Like a watchband. You know, we think we invented those things. I can remember flexible sleeve garters, as we called them. Sleeve garters, wearing them in Holland, flexible and expandable, as a boy. I was going to school and I had the—I was in the fourth grade, I think it was. Third or fourth grade. I can't remember the grade, but just [unclear]. I remember the teacher asking me to stand up and tell the assembled pupils about my oncoming trip to, move to America and that I thought was—being a gala occasion, of course, it stands out in my mind even today, that day I went to school dressed in my Sunday best and tell the rest of pupils about my oncoming voyage to America.

SIGRIST: What did you know about America at that point? You know, you're seven years old.

DENOOYER: I knew very little. All I knew, it was a land of promise and we had some relatives here. I can remember leaving home early in the morning with a lot of luggage.

SIGRIST: But before you left, did you have any idea or any expectation as a child of what you might find?

DENOOYER: None whatsoever. All I knew it was a very different country and there was much to be had. It was the land of milk and honey, you know, as it were.

SIGRIST: How were your parents talking about America before you left?

DENOOYER: I have no recollection of that, strange as it may seem. I suspect that being rather young, only what affected you yourself is what you remember. The rest is sort of in a haze.

SIGRIST: I was wondering if there was some—something that you saw that thought of America, you know.

DENOOYER: All I know is I looked forward to it with fond anticipation, as we say, and I was amazed at America, of course. Getting on a ship.

SIGRIST: Were a lot of people in Holland leaving for America at that time?

DENOOYER: No, not that many. Not that I remember. It was quite an event in any town when somebody left for America, but in spite of Holland being rather a forward country, even then, certainly they were engaged in international commerce. They were great people for banking and commerce, but a lot of Hollanders went to America on the promise of a better life, you know. There was always this—America was everybody's—I suspect that when I was a boy that America was everybody's dream, unless you were prosperous and had a business. But if you were lower middle class or working, then in other countries the peasants, the dream of America was ever present. That was the great promise.

SIGRIST: I think what we're going to do is we're going to pause just for a second so I can put another tape in the machine.

DENOOYER: Go ahead.

SIGRIST: And we'll get you to America. All right, so we're going to end Tape One and—

DENOOYER: Oh, I have to tell you about our trip from Oostera [PH] and then—

SIGRIST: We will. We'll talk about that on the second tape. Okay, I'm signing off.

END OF SIDE B, TAPE 1
BEGIN SIDE A, TAPE 2

SIGRIST: Okay, we're now beginning tape two with Marinus de Nooyer who came from the Netherlands in 1905 when he was seven, almost eight years old. Mr. de Nooyer can you tell me why—you told me a little bit why your parents wanted to come to America. Was there a specific reason that they wanted to come?

DENOOYER: Yes, I think it was largely predicated on stories that they had heard and my mother had a sister here who had prospered and had come back to Holland on several visits and traveled, I guess they called it, on a steamer second class, which was very nice and of course she spoke to her sister, my mother, about the beauties of America and the advantages that one can enjoy in America. Of course, based upon those several visits back to Holland and possibly the lack of progress in their own life, induced my mother to persuade my father that America would be a better place to live, being the land of opportunity. To everybody in Europe, America—the streets weren't paved in gold. We never believed that, but there was prosperity and if you were willing to work, you could make a good and comfortable living.

SIGRIST: So it was really your mother who got the ball rolling.

DENOOYER: My mother was—my father didn't have that much initiative. He was a dreamer. Yeah, he was a dreamer and a student of politics and he was more interested in the proletarian movement. My father was a proletarian.

SIGRIST: I should also say for the sake of the tape that you've got a candy in your mouth, so that may be picked up on tape.

DENOOYER: I'll spit this out.

SIGRIST: No, no, no, no, you finish it. I just wanted to say that on tape.

DENOOYER: And, of course, he being a proletariat, he sang the proletarian hymn which I remember even today the opening sentences, you know.

SIGRIST: Could you sing it for me on tape?

DENOOYER: It went something like this, "Ha, ha, the proletarian," and I don't remember. He would sing the proletarian hymn all the time. He was—well, like all proletariats, he was anti government. They were too greedy. They were too selfish. They were doing too

little. Not giving enough—taking too much and not giving anything back in proletarian. Proletarian I suspect that he might have been a revolutionary at heart, but he was a Mickey Mouse. There was no violence in my father. His proletarianism was one largely of reading and I suspect that's one of the reasons my father was so literate. He did a lot of reading. He had a good memory.

SIGRIST: That kind of educated socialism.

DENOOYER: Yeah, they did—he was very literate, my father was. When I think back, if he wasn't so indifferent, he could have gone a long way.

SIGRIST: How did he react to your mother's interest in going to America?

DENOOYER: I told you, he was in love with my mother. He would follow her to hell and back over hot coals if she said so. He was a slave. Slave to his—he was a slave, and I have to say this correctly. He was a slave to his love of a woman, who was my mother. I have never known a man—not because he was my father, but I have never known a man to love a woman more than my father loved my father, and it was—I guess I'm a lover at heart, too. I wrote some years ago one of the happiest moments of my life was when I found out my mother was a woman. From that point on, I became a lover of women.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about what you remember about the process of getting ready to go.

DENOOYER: But getting back to Holland. I can remember not the house we lived in when we left Holland, but we lived in another street, the Batta [PH] Pot, which would be possibly the hill path. Batta meaning some sort of a hill and pot being a path. And not adjacent to, but only about three or four hundred foot away was a pond, the vesta they called it, which is I believe Dutch for pond.

SIGRIST: V-E-S—

DENOOYER: V-E-S-T-A.

SIGRIST: Vesta.

DENOOYER: Vesta, and there used to be skating on there in the wintertime. In Holland once it freezes, it stays frozen. They don't have

fluctuating climates like we do here. Although they do have terrific storms, as you know, over the North Sea, which is the rottenest sea in the world, I guess. I could tell you a story about being in the North Sea in Denmark.

SIGRIST: Tell me about what you remember about—

DENOOYER: But I remember in the wintertime they'd have skating. They'd have stands on the ice, like we have at a carnival here. They'd have stands on the ice dispensing coffee, tea, chocolate. A lot of chocolate and I don't know whether they had music or not. I don't recollect but there was a lot of skating and I was—all my life I had an aversion to ice. I don't like ice. I can't walk on ice. I have trouble even today walking on ice, and we could then watch the skaters. In that part when we lived in the Batta Pot, I was only about five years old, I guess. My father'd take me by the hand and I'd remonstrate with him. I didn't want to go on the ice. He'd say to me, "Maurin, [speaking Dutch]," meaning there are beams under the ice. It won't break, the beams will hold it up, and he walked on the ice and the skaters knew because there was a lot of skating in Holland. It was rather pretty and nice. I always like to tell about it because it has such a nice memory, the hundreds of skaters there and the stands and you'd get a cup of cocoa, you know, and you'd see a lot of fun on ice. Even though I didn't like ice, because certainly at five I wasn't skating, but it was rather nice and I enjoyed it.

Of course, my aunts were good to me. I can remember and this may be haphazard, but as I recall, I can remember—I think it was the year before we left for America, my older brother and I went to visit my aunts in Middlevlessing [PH] and listen carefully to this. My maiden aunts purchased cigarettes for me so I would have cigarettes to smoke, seven years old. My maiden aunt bought cigarettes for me, so I would have cigarettes on my vacation. People say, "When did you smoke?" I say, "When I was six or seven years old," but it was an odd thing. Children smoked. I can almost not remember when I didn't smoke as a boy in Holland.

SIGRIST: Do you remember who taught you how to smoke?

DENOOYER: Well, my father smoked all the time. Everybody smoked. My father liked cigars. He always enjoyed cigars.

SIGRIST: What about the women?

DENOOYER: No, I don't know in Holland, probably in Amsterdam, which of course was a wide open city, which I have been to Amsterdam several times. I termed it the rottenest city in the world, but that's beside the point.

SIGRIST: Tell me about what you remember about getting ready to leave?

DENOOYER: And I can remember going to Flessinga and my maiden aunts—I tell the story today, people say, "No! Your maiden aunts! How old were you?" I say, "I was seven and my maiden aunts bought cigarettes for me as a gift." As a matter of fact, I can remember—and this I have digress, now coming to America and my father smoked a pipe. He bought Buckhorn tobacco. I think they still make it. Some years ago I saw a pack of it.

SIGRIST: Buckhorn.

DENOOYER: Buckhorn. You got six packages for a quarter. A quarter was a lot of money, and five was for him and one package was for my older brother and I for cigarettes, and we rolled our own cigarettes and we smoked. But when we came to America, we found out that children did not smoke in America. We weren't allowed to smoke outdoors, so we had to do our smoking indoors, which I enjoyed, I guess, in those days, but when I was about forty, I guess, somewhere between thirty and forty I stopped smoking. I haven't smoked in sixty-five years.

SIGRIST: Let me digress just for a moment. Tell me about when your parents got rid of everything in the house before you left for America.

DENOOYER: Yeah, and then of course, as I say, we lived with my grandmother.

SIGRIST: But what do you remember about them selling off the stuff in the house?

DENOOYER: Not to much except that it was sold and we had nothing. We had no house. We had no home. We had no furniture, so we had to live with my paternal grandmother, who I told you was a charming woman.

SIGRIST: Do you remember packing what you were going to take to America?

DENOOYER: No, my mother and father did all the packing. I had no interest in it, really. My interest was outdoors. I liked the outdoors.

SIGRIST: Do you remember taking something from Holland with you as a memento of your life, or something that was personal to you?

DENOOYER: No, I have no recollection of that either, but I do have a recollection of the last day in Holland, which we had to board a train. Trains were the only means of transportation—trains and boats, of course, horse and wagon. I remember going to the train station with a lot of luggage and we went from Gose to Breakups, which was a transfer station. We had to transfer to another train to Rotterdam. When we got to Rotterdam, of course, we boarded the steamboat. Before we did, we had to walk from the train station to the pier, which was to my recollection not a very long walk, but one of the most interesting walks I ever had in my life, although we used to walk on Sunday. Sunday was always a walk day. You didn't work on Sunday. You went to church. On Sunday walks, you'd walk in the countryside and you'd stop at a beer garden and there were no bars. There was no bars in Europe, you know. In Europe you drink sitting down and when I was a boy, you sat down in a room furnished with tables and usually red-checkered tablecloth and papa drank his beer straight and mother and children drank the beer with sugar. There was a sugar bowl on the table in the—yeah, what did I say was it?

SIGRIST: Beer garden?

DENOOYER: In the beer garden and you put a spoonful of sugar in a glass of beer and you were taught to drink—from the day you were born, you were taught to drink and of course, the parents drank ginava [PH] gin. Dutch gin, which is different than our gin, you know. It's a different flavor altogether and children and women always drank beer with sugar and on Sunday, of course, my mother would have a ginava.

SIGRIST: How long were you in Rotterdam before you got on the ship?

DENOOYER: We went directly from the train to the ship and that was an experience. That was the first time I saw foreigners. The first foreigner I saw was a big Russian with an African cap. He must have come from Siberia somewhere, one of those todders I guess. I must have looked at him a dozen times and mother and father dragging five kids along, you know, and a lot of luggage and you didn't have time to pause and look or reflect.

You were bound for that steamer. And I looked at that Russian and I saw his high cheekbones, dark skin, you know, somewhat of a—not an Oriental, but certainly not a Caucasian look, and I was so astounded at his appearance and the clothes he wore with that African cap that I guess until the day I die, which is some years hence, I hope, I bear that picture in my mind as one of the first and most striking foreigners I have ever seen. Then, of course, then there were Poles and Slavs with their shawls and voluminous skirts and a dozen petticoats. That was something else, again, but to get on that steamer. We came third class.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the name of the ship?

DENOOYER: I said it was the Rotterdam, but I have a book here on the Holland America Line and I'm led to believe that that was not the name. I have to write to them and find out what the name of the ship was.

SIGRIST: So you're not sure then.

DENOOYER: Not sure. I thought it was the Rotterdam, but the knowledge that I got—I bought this book. Last year, two years ago I was in England and we came back on a—we went to England. We flew over to England, came back on the QE2, which was another experience, but that's not relevant today. I remember getting on that steamship and we had a cabin with enough berths for mother, father and the five kids.

SIGRIST: There are seven of you traveling together.

DENOOYER: Seven of us traveling and getting into that ship was something else. As I say, seeing all those ships and all those foreigners, things you had never seen. The only foreigner I had ever seen was an Indian, an East Indian who had come as a male servant to some Holland who had been out in the—oh, out in the Dependency, the East Indies, you know.

SIGRIST: Some wealthy Hollander that you had seen.

DENOOYER: Yeah, and he brought one back and that was the first. I thought he was a Negro. I didn't know the difference. As a boy in Holland, I didn't know the difference between. He was a Black man. He wasn't Black because he was a Hindu. He was brown, but that's beside the point. He was a different color and this would sound strange today to think that to see one

lonesome Hindu manservant as a colored man, the only colored man you ever saw in your life until you got to Rotterdam. These are things that stand out in your mind as things that happened as a boy, as a young boy.

SIGRIST: They make an impression on a child.

DENOOYER: They make an indelible impression on your mind. As I say, never leaves you, that first Hindu I saw or East Indian. I suspect he was an East Indian, rather than a Hindu.

SIGRIST: Or the Russian that you saw.

DENOOYER: And this Russian and then all these Slovaks coming on the ship, and they all went in the steerage, you know. Steerage was in the hull, and there was a cork deck in between, which was porous. You could see through it, you know and as kids, you'd spit down on those poor peasants that were in. They had no place. They slept standing up, you know. No laying on the floor. They were really treated like cattle. Even in those days, I look with some [unclear] on the way those poor things, they were—well, they were cattle boats.

SIGRIST: What else do you remember about being on the ship and being a child? What could a child do on the ship?

DENOOYER: On the ship, well, my father always took us. You see, he had an insatiable curiosity, my father. He wanted to see everything and while it was a stormy passage—my poor mother was seasick from the moment we hit the hook of Holland into the North Sea, which as I say can be an impetuous, terrible of ocean as there is in the world, the North Sea.

SIGRIST: What time of the year is this?

DENOOYER: It was in November.

SIGRIST: In November that you left.

DENOOYER: Yeah, stormy season.

SIGRIST: November of—

DENOOYER: And the ship wasn't that big, you know. As I was told, it was eighty-five hundred ton. That's a small boat, you know, some two hundred, three hundred foot maybe. Compared to the

Queen Mary, the QE2, which I came back on in five days from London. From Southampton, rather, not London.

SIGRIST: So your father's very curious.

DENOOYER: Of course, we explored the whole ship and it was a stormy passage. Most of the time it was roped off. You couldn't go on deck, but no matter how bad the weather was, how squally the weather was, my father took the two oldest, my oldest brother and I, and we always went on deck every day. Even though we had to hold onto the ropes to walk around, and it was a small ship, as I say, eighty-five hundred ton compared to the things we have today which are a hundred times that size.

SIGRIST: What were some of your favorite parts of the boat?

DENOOYER: And—oh, being curious, like my father, I liked to look in on the second and first class and see how regally they lived, compared to what we had. Although we had regular meals. And one thing stood out on that damn ship, at the end of the passageway they had a barrel of herring and my father would eat a herring a day, and I still love herring. I still have pickled herring in my refrigerator every day. I eat pickled herring, not every day, but as an ordinary [unclear]. I still enjoy herring and smoked herring.

SIGRIST: What did they feed you on the ship?

DENOOYER: Well, a lot of bread and butter, of course, and potatoes and cabbage and things of that sort.

SIGRIST: Where did they feed you?

DENOOYER: You had a dining room.

SIGRIST: Does anything stick out in your mind about the dining room?

DENOOYER: No. No, it was very ordinary, so I guess I didn't remember because it was just—meals were just incidental. They were not events. They were merely a means to an end to keep body and soul together, I guess.

SIGRIST: Do you have any recollection of bringing food yourself onto the ship?

DENOOYER: No, we didn't bring any food. You didn't bring any food. You were loaded with clothes and luggage and things that you thought you had to bring to America. They tell me some Hollanders came to America brought their stones for the cabbage barrel, which of course we prided ourselves on being city folks and being rather cosmopolitan, being a big market town. So we knew better than that, although we did bring our own feather bedding. But it was rather a pleasant experience.

SIGRIST: Did the ship make any other stops before it came to New York?

DENOOYER: Yeah, I think it stopped in France. Now, what was that port? I can't think of the port, but it stopped in France to pick up passengers. I can't think of the port. Memory slips a little bit. Not that it slips, but you don't hark back to it often enough so you have trouble remembering.

SIGRIST: Your memory's doing all right. You're doing okay.

DENOOYER: But I enjoyed the ocean passage.

SIGRIST: Do you know how long it took from Rotterdam?

DENOOYER: Thirteen days.

SIGRIST: Thirteen days, in November of 1905.

DENOOYER: I always describe them as for my poor mother, thirteen miserable days.

SIGRIST: Did they try to treat her seasickness in any way?

DENOOYER: Oh, no. You were left to your own devices. Hey, you were a passenger. You were lucky you had a cabin. You had a cabin, you had bunks and you slept comfortable. You ate three comfortable meals a day. You could get a snack once in awhile, even though it was stormy. Most people didn't eat, I guess, but I've never been seasick in my life.

SIGRIST: Do you have any recollection of any of the staff members on the ship? The stewards or the captain?

DENOOYER: The one thing I remember about staff is how they treated the steerage. They didn't have cattle prods, thank goodness. Of course, cattle prods I don't think had been invented in those days yet. You know what a cattle prod is, an electric

broomstick, I call it, that they shove up your other end and make you jump. But the thing that stuck in my—even today, stuck in my mind is that they herded them like cattle. Push them here; push them there. Make them go here; make them go there. I would say by and large, I suppose for the day and age it was all right, but to my mind it was always inhuman.

SIGRIST: Do you remember any safety drills on the ship?

DENOOYER: They had none.

SIGRIST: Because this is an early—I mean 1905 is pre Titanic.

DENOOYER: Yeah, very much so. No, they had no safety drills. First of all, it was a small ship, eighty-five hundred. I don't know what the passenger manifest was, but who could tell passengers? As I say, the cattle were down below and they were just herded in, as many as they could, I guess. It was a matter of dollars and cents, you see. These ships, besides their biggest cargo and their best paying cargo was passengers, middle Europeans because they were cattle, you see, and they transported them like cattle.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how much your passage cost or do you remember your parents ever talking about that?

DENOOYER: No, it was minimal. It took my father a long time. He was—my father and mother—my aunt paid for the passage, and I'll bet it took my father three or four years to pay it back. It was a minimal amount of money, but money was scarce. A dollar the value. A loaf of bread was a nickel. Nobody had a nickel.

SIGRIST: Tell me what you remember about the ship arriving in New York.

DENOOYER: Well, the ship arrived in Hoboken. Hoboken was a big port, bigger than New York. Most of the transatlantic liners, other than the English, but the German and Holland and I think the Swedes all landed in Hoboken. Hoboken was a big port and I can remember disembarking and going to a big pier where you were herded. You were herded then and we weren't allowed to go home because of my father's appearance. My father was snow white, and I have a picture here somewhere. I don't have it handy. He looked like Jesus Christ, had a black beard and a rather gaunt appearance and piercing black eyes. He's a dead picture for Jesus Christ, if I ever saw one. He was so pale and like I said, it was accented by his black beard, you know. It was

black and he had good hair, properly cut but still black and then this pale white color that he had. He was always—his skin was almost snow white and they didn't like his looks at all, so they decided he had better go to Ellis Island for an examination. They were very fussy about health in those days and letting people in. If you had any—tuberculosis was the one they were afraid of. Anything of pulmonary diseases, they sent you back. The steamship company had to take you back, free.

So after two days of medical examinations, they let us go.

SIGRIST: Tell me about the two days that you spent on Ellis Island.

DENOOYER: I remember Ellis Island. Who wouldn't remember Ellis Island? Eight years old and being not cooped up, but being confined to Ellis Island. We slept in double-decker beds and women and children were in one section and the men were in another. Husband and wife did not sleep together in Ellis Island. There's a section for men and a section for women and children. They treated you well. I remember having oatmeal for breakfast. Prunes. First time I ate prunes in my life. I tell everybody I learned how to eat prunes on Ellis Island, and they were good. As a matter of fact, I still relish prunes, although I try and buy jumbo prunes because I like them. But in the wintertime I have prunes in the house and I still like them. I guess I hark back to those two days I spent on the island and my introduction to American prunes, which I had never seen before. But the food was plentiful and it was good. It was well prepared.

SIGRIST: Do you remember where they fed you on the island? I mean, what it looked like?

DENOOYER: Yeah, I was in that chamber. I was in Ellis Island a couple years ago. In fact, I have my name on the wall there and in fact, I have a certificate on the wall there.

SIGRIST: Yes, I see it.

DENOOYER: Is that Ellis Island right there?

SIGRIST: It's Ellis Island, yup. That's it. What do you remember about what the dining room looked like?

DENOOYER: Well, it was a big—I guess it was the great hall. Then you had great big long tables and, as I say, women and children were in one area and men in the other. I can remember the food was

good and strange as it may seem, I enjoyed my stay in Ellis Island, which may sound strange to you. You may have never heard that, but they were good to you and they treated you very humanely and I would say that it was—because it remains with me even to this day. It was a real good welcome to America. Not the United States. It was a real good welcome to America and I enjoyed it.

SIGRIST: Do you know how your mother was feeling during these two days?

DENOOYER: Oh, she was very complacent. She accepted it and she took care of—she was occupied taking care of the brood and then, of course, after two days we took the ferry back to Hoboken.

END OF SIDE A, TAPE 2
BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE 2

SIGRIST: Did your father ever talk about later on what they did to him in those two days?

DENOOYER: Merely physical examinations, that's all. And as he said, "Well, they found—there was nothing wrong with me, so they couldn't find anything. So they said okay, enter." So we went back to Hoboken where my aunt picked us up and, of course, we had to go from Hoboken to Garfield and that was on a trolley car, of course. You took the Hoboken trolley to Passaic and then transferred to the main line from Passaic to Garfield. It's funny how some things stand out in your mind. The first thing I saw was clothes hanging on a line with a pulley line and a clothes pole and clothes on the line, which I had never seen, of course. In Holland you wash your clothes and you lay them on a lawn to bleach and then dry. As I recall, my mother paid a penny to lay her clothes on the lawn. They charge you to lay your clothes on a lawn to dry and bleach. But to see people hanging clothes on a line, on a clothes pole, all these what you call pulley lines which are filled with clothes, was a strange sight.

Strange until we got to Garfield, of course, where my aunt lived and her husband had a saloon, which was a very popular rendezvous in Garfield in those days.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the name of the saloon?

DENOOYER: Van Hovings.

SIGRIST: H-O-V-E-N?

DENOOYER: V-A-N. Capital, H-O-V-I-N-G. No, no G. Van Hovin, I believe it was. He was a character.

SIGRIST: Tell me about being put into school.

DENOOYER: Of course, we moved into a—it was a single family house, but all on one floor, or one of these little things that you see around the older towns. They built these little what we call story and a half houses and it had two bedrooms. Of course, a coal stove and we were lucky we had running water. That is where you ran after it. It was a pump. Your running water was a pump. You pumped water.

SIGRIST: But it pumped inside the house?

DENOOYER: It pumped inside the house, which froze in the winter and you had to save enough water to prime it in the morning and the drain board was wood. No table tops or anything of that sort. The drain board, if you were lucky—if you were lucky, you had a pump. You had a drain board, wooden drain board covered with zinc. You know what zinc is?

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

DENOOYER: They had sheet zinc and that was it. That was pretty good living in those days. Of course, you had no indoor plumbing. My God, that was never thought. You had an outhouse.

SIGRIST: Did you have indoor plumbing in Gose?

DENOOYER: Eh—I think we had running water, but the toilet facilities were something that you bathed in a washtub, a wooden washtub, you know. That's another story.

SIGRIST: But you had running water in the house.

DENOOYER: There was water in the house, to the best of my knowledge.

SIGRIST: Just not a toilet.

DENOOYER: They had a toilet, but the toilet consisted of a sort of a seat and underneath was a barrel and you did your sanitary business literally in a barrel which was removed once a week or every two weeks and they took the barrel out and gave you a clean barrel. I suspect for the time and age, that was pretty good

sanitation. Of course, here in America, while we had water, a pump in the house, you had to use an outhouse, of course, and you always had a chamber under the bed and a slop pot, of course, in which to empty the chamber. If you had to go to the john at night, if it wasn't too—well, no matter, you just put on a hat and coat and go to the john at night. I can remember going out in the middle of winter. Wasn't very pleasant. You didn't stay too long in that john. We were lucky we had a two holer, and of course, it was somebody's job on a Saturday to—we had [unclear]. My father made sure. One of the older boys was designated to shine all the shoes on Saturday. He had to shine all the shoes on Saturday. Another one of the older boys had to cut the toilet paper. You took newspapers and cut it into suitable squares and put a hole through it and hang it on a string in the toilet, and somebody else had to wash the toilet. You kept things pretty sanitary, in spite of being somewhat primitive. But you were sanitary and you were clean.

SIGRIST: You did the best you can under the circumstances.

DENOOYER: Well, you're going back, you do the best you can with what you have and make the most out of it. That was very much the fashion of life. Of course, Saturday, you got a bath once a week. Let's face it, that's all you got. You washed and cleaned every day. You didn't have toothbrushes. You rinsed your mouth out very clean and you gargled salt water.

SIGRIST: Tell me about school. Tell me how old you were—

DENOOYER: Yeah, well, wait a minute. You have the Saturday bath was something else. We were five boys and my mother would have, oh, great big wooden tub. She didn't like galvanized tubs. They had galvanized tubs, but she had wooden washtubs. I suspect they were about forty-two inches, three, three and a half foot in diameter, and she'd fill it with lukewarm water, as cool as she could keep it without spending too much time heating it on the cold stove. And she put a lot of towels around there and the oldest boy got a bath first. The youngest took the last bath. And you changed your underwear once a week. You were lucky, I understand some of our Italian friends in the wintertime changing only once a season. Mother sewed them into the underwear—sewed them into the—this is hearsay, but sewed them into the underwear and that was that, and took it off in the spring. Smelled to high heaven. But they were good days.

And school, getting into school, I can remember my first day in school. I was eight years old now, but didn't know a

word of English. I can remember going shopping for my mother. She'd send you to the store and not knowing any English, you had to use your index finger and point to what you wanted in the store until you learned to speak English. You had to learn. There were no bilingual. There was no such thing. You came to America, you became an American, period, and you were happy to become an American. Even though I was in I think it was the third or fourth grade, when I came to America, they put me in kindergarten and I had to learn English. That's something funny, too, the big fellows on the street, they taught you English first. The first thing that you're taught and they always call you by your nationality. "Hey, Dutch. Hey, Pollock, hey this." "Hey Dutch, you go home tell your father, hey you're a nice son of a bitch." They taught you all—you'd talk all the swear words first and all the vulgar words first until you learned to differentiate, but you learned fast and you Americanized fast.

I can remember going into that, I think it was first grade and I had to learn English, of course. You point to your nose and say, "This is your nose and these are your eyes and this is your forehead and these are your hands and those are your feet, and these are the buttons on your shirt." And you learned English and you assimilated and before you knew it, you were part of the scene and happy to be so. You no longer had to point and you spoke language. They tell me for many years I spoke with a Dutch accent. In fact, some people tell me it creeps in once in awhile now. But they were happy days.

SIGRIST: Tell me about how the other children treated you when you first went into school?

DENOOYER: Oh, very good. Very good. Very receptive. Very receptive.

SIGRIST: Were there other immigrants in school with you?

DENOOYER: Yes, there immigrants. There were always immigrants. In those days there were immigrants all over. New Jersey was popular to immigrants. The metropolitan area, you know.

SIGRIST: Talk about how your parents attempted to learn English, if they attempted to learn.

DENOOYER: My father and mother spoke what I call fractured English and they spoke fractured English all their life, although my mother enjoyed reading the paper in her own fashion. She got to be an avid baseball fan. She loved baseball. She loved baseball, and yet, well, we were brought up under somewhat more European

customs, rather than American. Now, case in point. On Sunday, or get back to it, you always had a Sunday suit and had Sunday shoes. You also had Sunday habits. Although we didn't go to church—my father was an agnostic and my mother was a Catholic. Ostensibly, that is, but she didn't go to church either. So consequently I never went to church until they built a Catholic church and then she says, "Go to church." When I got to be sixteen, I said, "Mother, this is the last Sunday I go to church. If you want to go to church, you go," which she didn't. "I'm free."

SIGRIST: So what were some of those Sunday habits that you were talking about?

DENOOYER: Sunday habit. You had to dress up for Sunday. You had to put on your Sunday suit. You had to stay clean. You enjoyed the luxury of breakfast together, en famille. Family together have breakfast. That was predetermined. You had Sunday dinner. Dinner was at one o'clock. They had dinner at noon. Everybody dressed up. Everybody sit at the table, eat Sunday dinner, what was always of course what the Germans call Sunteig [PH], you know, Sunday meat. You'd always have something special. I would imagine all Europeans and Americans, too, you always had a special dish because Sunday was a special eating day and you weren't allowed to play ball on the street. You weren't allowed to play ball in the yard. You could play catch, but that's all. No running around. It's Sunday and you observed Sunday. After dinner, or no—[coughs] After breakfast papa and the big boys went for a walk, and I mean a walk. He'd walk six or seven miles for a Sunday walk. On the way back you'd stop in at a saloon for a beer and then go home for dinner.

After dinner, mother got dressed, father, mother and kids—kids in front, father and mother behind, you'd walk, and I can remember as if it were yesterday. We walked from Garfield. We'd walk up Passaic to Main Avenue, and Passaic, which is I would say maybe two miles. Walk Main Avenue, Monroe Street, which is another three-quarters of a mile and then walk down Monroe Street back home. The whole walk was about probably four or five miles, a pleasant Sunday afternoon walk with the family. Kids all dressed up in front, mother and father and you got two cents to spend in the candy store on a Sunday. We were allowed to spend money.

[unclear] what we termed the Black Holland. There's a Protestant Hollands who wore only black on Sunday, you know, and most of them only during the week. They bought

their candy on Saturday so they could eat it on Sunday. They weren't allowed to spend any money or accept any money. They were—the Reform Dutch were very strict and then of course, we being the oddball on the block, I guess it was, we were free thinkers religiously, so the only thing we did was obey the social laws in that we weren't allowed to play. Sunday was a day set apart, but we dressed up and we had Sunday dinner and we walked. Oh, did this and that, but we didn't go to church. None of us went to church.

SIGRIST: Let me digress just for a moment. Tell me what job your father got when he first came to America.

DENOOYER: First job he got in America, you'll laugh. I still laugh today. They gave him a team of horses to drive for a lumber yard, which lasted only about a week. The only way he could get home was because the horses knew the way home, he didn't. Then he went to work in a chemical factory as a laborer. He worked hard.

SIGRIST: Doing what? What did he do in the factory, do you know?

DENOOYER: In those days, he worked in a chemical factory. The barges came up the river loaded with sulphur. Did you ever see raw sulphur, yellow? It looks somewhat like raw gold, I guess, yellow sulphur. It came up in barges up the river and they unloaded them by hand on the dock, and that was miserable work. Then later on he worked in a paper mill and became a beater man employed. They used Scandinavian paper—oh, what do they call it? Paper stock, you know.

SIGRIST: What kind of a man you called him? A beat—

DENOOYER: A beater man.

SIGRIST: What's that?

DENOOYER: They would take this pulp, wood pulp. They would take this pulp, and it came in great big bales from Scandinavia, I imagine because of its price, and they had these great big—they were big. They were probably thirty foot in diameter, with great big wheels to grind up this pulp in water, you see, into a mush. The finer you ground it, of course, the finer the paper it would produce. And they made tissue paper, so they ground it real good. They had a great big grinding wheel in there, as I—the

diameter of that beater was probably thirty foot, now I'm talking from recollection.

SIGRIST: And you're calling it a beater?

DENOOYER: A beater. Paper beater. A beater.

SIGRIST: Beater, oh, beater.

DENOOYER: B-E—

SIGRIST: B-E-A-T-E-R.

DENOOYER: Yeah, a paper beater. As the pulp became smaller and smaller, it would lower the cutter, the wheel and grind it finer until it got to be almost like a very thin soup. Then of course from there it went to the paper making machines. They use a very quality—as I recall it, they use a very high quality pulp and made excellent tissue paper.

SIGRIST: Did your father ever go back into the shoemaking business?

DENOOYER: No, he just repaired shoes to make an extra few bucks, but he never went back.

SIGRIST: How did he feel about not being able to ply the trade that he knew?

DENOOYER: My father accepted everything. He had an air of acceptance. He was a free spirit. Whatever he did, he enjoyed and he dreamed, and he loved.

SIGRIST: Did your mother—

DENOOYER: And he was a good father. He didn't swear. He didn't carouse. He enjoyed his beer. He enjoyed his cigars. He enjoyed getting dressed on Sunday. He never swore. Never used vulgar language. Taught us good manners, good habits, respect for people. You weren't allowed to smoke on the streets, as I told you before, because they don't do that in America. If you're an American, you don't smoke on the street.

SIGRIST: Even though you had in Holland.

DENOOYER: Yeah. He adopted American habits. You're in America, you're an American. None of this bilingual stuff. We came here for a

better life. We came here to become Americans and we're going to be Americans. Immigrants had a different attitude in those days. You left the old country for a better life. You adopted the fashion and the custom of whatever country you went to and were happy with it and enjoyed it and spoke the language and adopted their customs and habits and became a good citizen. While you may have not forgotten about the mother tongue and you certainly went to native—they all went to native churches, Hollanders. Jew, gentile, Greek or Mohammed, didn't make any difference. Whatever they were, they went to their own churches and God knows, we were a cosmopolitan area.

At one time Passaic had the distinction of being the only city in the United States that had a larger foreign population than native, which wasn't too uncommon in those days because let's face it, America is a nation of immigrants. We forget it today and a lot of uppity American citizens today look down upon immigrants, but we were a nation of immigrants and it was immigrants that made America. The Germans, the Swedes, the Hollanders, the Poles, the Russians, they all had their spot. They all had their place and they all made a contribution to what we call our present day America and we shouldn't permit people to forget it. We were taught not to look with disdain upon foreigners because we were once foreigners, too, and we became good Americans. My father believed in doing something for your community and all of us were—later years, particularly my older brother and I, we were engaged. We gave our bit to the community.

SIGRIST: Did the family become citizens?

DENOOYER: Yes, my father became a citizen late. I had to become—I'm a naturalized citizen.

SIGRIST: Tell me about what it was like to become a citizen and how it made you feel.

DENOOYER: I became a citizen for the First World War—World War I. 1918 I became—it was after 1919 I guess I became a citizen because my older brother and I had to take our own citizenship because we were too old to [unclear] derivative. The rest of the boys were all paid the status of derivative citizenship, which is the next step to native born, but my older brother and I had to. I can remember going for my citizen papers. I was an adult at that time. I guess I was twenty-one, I guess.

SIGRIST: 1919.

DENOOYER: My father waited a long time to acquire citizenship. Wouldn't spend the money. It cost money and you had to study and of course he had no problem.

SIGRIST: What was the process? Where did you have to go?

DENOOYER: We had to go to Hackensack and you had to appear. You had to study. In that case, of course, I was fully conversant with the language so I didn't have to do what my father did. You had to study and answer a whole series of questions, such as you had to know your President, your Vice President, your Senator, your Congressman, your Mayor, your councilman, the form of government. Things of that nature. They made you qualify and I can remember when I went, which was right after World War I, which I missed by fourteen days. I had registered. I had been examined. I had been approved and had been assigned to go to camp on November the 25th. Well, Armistice Day was November the 11th, so I didn't go.

My father didn't believe in volunteerism, coming from Europe, where they always had—militarism was part of your life and he said, "If they want you, they can have you. If they want you, they can have you, but you don't have to volunteer." Volunteerism wasn't a Dutch philosophy. If they took you, fine. They had the [Dutch] of course, which was a lottery. Army conscripts were taken by a series of lotteries. Those who were free, celebrated and got drunk, and those who were numbered, of course, were a bit downcast. Having, I assume, that my father, having been brought up in that atmosphere of where there was a lottery and militarism in Holland was not voluntary, although I had a voluntary—no, I don't think they had a voluntary. Everything was by conscription in Holland and he didn't—he was free in the [unclear] which is the lottery and, of course, that was it. That was his military philosophy: if they want you, they can have you. You don't have to volunteer. Dutchmen didn't volunteer.

SIGRIST: So you were lucky, you missed on it by just a few days.

DENOOYER: So when I went for my citizenship, of course, they asked me about what I did during the war and I worked in textiles in those days, and I suspect I gave a good account of myself and told them about my experience and my scheduled departure for Fort Dix on the 25th, with the Armistice on the 11th, I never made it, and I had no problem, of course.

SIGRIST: How did it make you feel to become a citizen?

DENOOYER: Well—

SIGRIST: You'd already been here for a long time.

DENOOYER: I had been. I always felt as a citizen. Being not native, but being a resident where you were accepted as equal. In those days, they didn't question your citizenship or whether you were a citizen or not, although again in those days all Europeans wanted to become American citizens. There wasn't any question about it because, as I had said before, they came here with the desire for a better life, and that better life was American. Not United States, was American. And having attained a better life, the next thing was to become a citizen of that country, and they took pride in their citizenship. It was a big—I suspect in most foreigners—I know for my father it was a big step.

SIGRIST: Did your mother become a citizen, also?

DENOOYER: No. No, I think—I'm not sure in those days the wife became a citizen by way of marriage. In fact, up until a few years ago, if you married an American, you attained citizenship through marriage.

SIGRIST: Did your father do that almost as quickly as he could, once you got here?

DENOOYER: No. No, no, he waited too damn long to suit me. But I had—I had no choice in the matter until I was old enough to apply for citizenship and the day I became eligible was the day I applied for citizenship.

SIGRIST: We have just a couple of minutes left here, and I just want to know, looking back on your life, you're ninety-eight now. You'll be ninety-nine in December. You look great. You have a great memory. Tell me what you're the proudest of that you've done in your life, in three minutes.

DENOOYER: In three minutes?

SIGRIST: Three minutes you've got.

P: My fraternal connections. My municipal connections. I've been a member of the Board of Adjustment for fourteen years. I was a marry of the Passaic Valley Water Commission, which they later employed me for thirty years. My fraternal connections. I was a member of the Masonic fraternity. I became Master of Masonic Lodge, and my political connections in Passaic. I had tremendous political connections. I went far in politics. Never lived from it because in politics you're a king today and a bum tomorrow, and I made a good living and politics was an avocation, but a pleasant one. And I had a lot of fun in politics, made a lot of friends, still have them. I made a lot—they tell me I was a good speaker. I was very vocal and they tell me I was eloquent. Some people called the Silver Tongued Orator and others called me the Man with the Golden Voice, and I enjoyed politics because I didn't live from it.

And it was a hobby and I rendered service to my community, and that's the one thing my father and mother taught me. That give something back to the municipality in which you live. Give something back and my brother had, the [unclear] Vocational School was named after him. The [unclear] Auditorium, but they named it after he died. I did better than that. When I worked in Passaic Valley Water Commission, they constructed a museum and called it the Marinus de Nooyer Waterworks Museum. I'm one of the few people and I'm very proud—probably my proudest distinction is the fact that I had a museum named after while I was alive.

SIGRIST: That is—

DENOOYER: That's something to be proud of and I think by and large I'm very satisfied. For my ninety-nine years, I think I made a substantial contribution. I'm proud of it and yet in all humility, I say you couldn't do less.

SIGRIST: Mr. de Nooyer, we need to stop right now. We're all out of time, but I want to thank you very much. It's been a pleasure.

DENOOYER: It's been my pleasure. I love to—

SIGRIST: We could do this for anther three hours, I think. This is Paul Sigrist signing off with Marinus de Nooyer on Tuesday, April 9th, 1996 in Passaic, New Jersey. Thank you sir.

DENOOYER: And thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

EI-736/DENOOYER: